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THE BOUNDARY QUESTION.

This subject has become painfully familiar to our readers. We shall not attempt a full account of the pending controversy; but a brief sketch will suffice to show its nature, its origin and present position. A great deal has been written upon it, and its outlines may be generally known; but on some points incorrect or vague notions prevail in this country, and probably still more in England.

ORIGIN OF THE DISPUTE.

The whole difficulty has arisen from the different construction put by the parties upon the treaty of 1783, which terminated the revolutionary war, and defined the boundaries of our country. The second article of that treaty declares them to be "from the north-west angle of Nova Scotia, viz., that angle *which is formed by a line drawn due north from the source of St. Croix river to the Highlands, along the said Highlands which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the river Saint Lawrence, from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean,* to the north-westernmost head of Connecticut river, &c., &c. East, by a line to be drawn along the middle of the river St. Croix, *from its mouth in the bay of Fundy to its source;* and from its source directly north to the aforesaid Highlands, which divide the rivers that fall into the *Atlantic Ocean*, from those which fall into the river St. Lawrence; comprehending all islands within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States, and lying between lines to be drawn due east from the points where the aforesaid boundaries between *Nova Scotia* on the one part, and *East Florida* on the other, shall respectively touch the Bay of Fundy and the *Atlantic Ocean*," &c.

It must be remembered, that these boundaries were defined in Paris by men who had never been on the ground, and that no effort was made to ascertain any part of them by actual survey till after our last war with England. The negotiators of the treaty of Ghent in 1814, disagreed concerning our north-eastern boundary, and provided for its settlement by survey or reference. The commissioners, sent jointly by England and the United States to run that line, could not agree; and the matter was finally referred to king William, of Holland. An official translation of his award, given January 10, 1831, is now before us; but it is much too long to be transferred to our pages. Nor is it easy to give an intelligible

abstract of its reasonings; and we shall content ourselves with merely stating its grand result.

The British commissioners, deeming it physically and geographically impossible to run *any* line that would answer in all respects to the letter of the treaty of 1783, insisted on the necessity of a *conventional line*, leaving it for the arbiter to say where that line should be; and the Dutch king decided, that it ought to run from the monument at the head of the St. Croix due north to the river St. Johns, thence along that river to the junction of the St. Francis, and thence along the St. Francis to its source in the highlands that divide the tributary streams of the St. Johns from those which empty into the St. Lawrence. This award gave to England a little more than one fourth of the territory in dispute, and the passage which she so much needs from New Brunswick to Quebec; while it took from us a tract of land so remote, and so unlikely to be settled for many generations, that it would not soon, if ever, be of much value to the State of Maine, and gave as an equivalent a strip of land three miles wide, extending across the northern extremities of Vermont and New York, and including the fort on Rouse's Point, which is said to have cost us more than \$300,000.

VALUE OF THE TERRITORY IN DISPUTE.

On this point there is not a little misconception. The *whole* territory in dispute is 10,705 square miles, or 6,851,200 acres; more than all Massachusetts. Of this tract, more than 5,000,000 were awarded to us, and less than 2,000,000 to Great Britain; and, as she signified her willingness to accept the award, less than 2,000,000 acres, and those by far the least valuable to us, are now in dispute. A committee of the Massachusetts Legislature in 1838 estimated the whole tract to be worth \$3,000,000; and, at this rate, the part awarded to England would be less than \$1,000,000, for which a pretty fair equivalent, considering all the circumstances of the case, was offered in the fort on Rouse's Point, and the long strip of land from the Connecticut River to the St. Lawrence.

"By taking the map of the disputed territory," says a writer well acquainted with the whole subject, "it will be seen, that all that part of it, on which trespasses have been committed, might have been *indisputably* ours, if we had accepted the award of the Dutch king, and that the small corner which would have been left to England, north of the 45th degree of latitude, would have been very nearly compensated for by Rouse's Point and the strip of land, three miles wide, extending from Lake Champlain to the St. Lawrence, which was awarded to us as an equivalent. It always appeared to me that the award should have been at once accepted; and I

verily thought our good people of Maine were playing a sort of Yankee trick, in pretending that they would reject the award, for fear that their over-eagerness would prevent Great Britain from doing so. 'I happen to know,' as the reviewers say, that one ex-governor of Maine thought it advisable to accept, with the expectation that what we should get from the general government for Rouse's Point, and the fort built on it, at an expense, I believe, of \$300,000, and from the sale of the land awarded us joining the north border of the State of New York, would be more than an equivalent for the small part of the disputed territory to be ceded to Great Britain. The difficulty was with *us*,—for I am a Maine man myself, but of neither party in politics, and run the risk of being mobbed when I get home, by both parties; but I must do my duty, regardless of consequences; and if the loss of one life will save my country from war, she is welcome to mine. The difficulty is, that both political parties made the boundary question a hobby-horse to ride into power on, and those who talked biggest about State rights, and the glory of Maine, and her ability to cope single-handed with Great Britain, got the votes. Thus we have got ourselves worked up into the delirium of a war-fever; and, as usual, in all such cases, consider moderate men as traitors and enemies to the state. The same spirit seems to have run through the country; and that man is esteemed the greatest patriot who is most ready to involve his country in war for any cause, or for no cause, and it is the same in all other countries, Christian or pagan."

PROGRESS OF THE CONTROVERSY.

Our refusal of King William's award threw the whole matter back into its former condition. Negotiation has continued, but failed to unite the parties. We insist on *our* construction of the treaty of 1783; England, deeming it impossible to determine the boundary by the contradictory terms of that treaty, is strenuous for a conventional line; and meanwhile causes of jealousy and collision have been multiplying. It was understood, if not expressly agreed, that each party should, till the termination of the controversy, retain possession of whatever territory had actually been under its jurisdiction, but cautiously abstain from encroaching upon the limits of the other. Here was a point of great delicacy and danger. Each party claimed the *whole* territory in dispute; each had exercised jurisdiction over more or less of it; and, as it was well nigh impossible to determine precisely at what point of an almost unbroken forest, British authority stopped, and American began, their respective claims of jurisdiction came ere-long into direct, angry collision.

The State of Maine has never been at ease on this subject; and after occasionally hesitating whether to relinquish or compromise a part of her claim for the sake of peace, she has for a few years past been very strenuous for what she conceives to be her rights in the case. The contest has become a hobby, on which both of her political parties have sought to ride into favor and power. Her last governor sent commissioners to ascertain, by actual survey, the boundary marked out in the treaty of 1783; their report confirmed the popular opinion in favor of her claim; and her present governor, wishing to make the most of this hobby, and resolved not to be outdone by his predecessor, called a secret session of her legislature on the 24th of January, and secured the adoption of measures for expelling trespassers from that part of the disputed territory over which Maine, whether rightfully or not, had actually exercised jurisdiction in various ways. Some two hundred men were despatched as an armed posse, to assist the land-agent in arresting the depredators who were said to be cutting down the best of the timber. The agent, decoyed by the trespassers, was taken to Fredericton, N. B., and lodged in jail; and the British warden, appointed over the same territory, was seized, and brought to Bangor, Me.

Here the collision struck fire. Sir John Harvey, governor of New Brunswick, resisted the claim of Maine to jurisdiction over the valley of the Aroostook, from which she had sent a force to expel trespassers, issued his proclamation against the movement as an invasion of her majesty's dominions, and despatched to Gov. Fairfield a message complaining of the act, and saying that he was instructed to hold that part of the disputed territory under his exclusive jurisdiction until the dispute about it should be brought to a close, and that, unless the troops of Maine were withdrawn, he should be compelled either to expel them by force, or disobey the instructions of his government.

The effect of this announcement is well known. It kindled a blaze all over Maine, and more or less through the whole land. Gov. Fairfield called at once for some ten or twelve thousand troops, and the legislature unanimously voted \$800,000, to defend the State against what was called a threatened invasion, and to assert by the sword her claim to jurisdiction over the territory in dispute. She appealed to Massachusetts as half owner of the soil, and to the general government for military aid in settling at once this protracted and vexatious controversy. The President issued his proclamation asserting the right of Maine to the disputed territory, but recommending her to withdraw her troops, and leave the

matter to be adjusted between the governments of Great Britain and the United States; our Secretary of State, and the British minister at Washington, published a protocol, advising a cessation of all military movements on both sides; but Congress burst at once into a blaze, and passed at a dash the strong acts of \$10,000,000, and 50,000 men, to be used by the President at discretion, for the defence of the country. Here the matter stood at the close of the last session of Congress.

APPEAL TO THE FRIENDS OF PEACE, THROUGHOUT THE
UNITED STATES.*

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,—A crisis has come which demands our united efforts for the preservation of peace between ourselves and a nation from whose enmity we have more to fear, and from whose friendship more to hope for, than from any other nation on the globe. In the present state of feeling, we should expect little or no success from any appeal we could make to politicians; and we therefore turn to the intelligent, pious and philanthropic portion of the community, who hold in their hands a moral power sufficient to avert the catastrophe which now threatens us.

We need not stop to review in detail the steps which have brought us to a crisis so deeply deplorable. The executive of Maine, under cover of expelling trespassers from her soil, has sent an army to take military possession of lands in dispute between Great Britain and the United States; the governor of New Brunswick complains of this act as an encroachment upon the jurisdiction of his sovereign, and says his instructions will oblige him, unless those troops are withdrawn, to repel them by force; and anon we hear from Maine an earnest, impatient call for aid in asserting her claim to the disputed territory by the sword, and a cry for blood in the last resort, echoed through the land by a class of politicians and presses that loudly insist on war as the only means of settling the long-protracted dispute concerning our north-eastern bound-

* This Appeal, issued by our Committee as soon as they saw any serious ground of alarm, was sent to more than fifty newspapers, nearly all religious; but so few of them, not one in five, published it, that we copy it, partly to record our testimony in the case, and partly to let our friends see what sort of a document it was that so many *Christian* editors excluded from their columns, and not a solitary paper of any kind in *Maine* could be persuaded to insert. We rejoice in the assurance, however, that it has met a warm response from the greater part of those who have read it, and trust that Christians, even in Maine, will, when fully recovered from their war-fever, commend us for the prompt and bold stand we took at a time when few were found to lift their voice for moderation and peace.